

Crediting Juices in the Summer Food Service Program

This guidance applies to meals and snacks served in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). For information on the SFSP meal patterns and the vegetables/fruits component, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) resource, visit the "[Meal Patterns](#)" section of the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) SFSP webpage and refer to the CSDE's resource, [Requirements for the Vegetables/Fruits Component of the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns](#).

For information on the crediting requirements, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program](#) webpage and [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Training on the crediting requirements for the vegetables/fruits component is available in the CSDE's Summer Meals annual training module, [Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns Part 5: Vegetables/Fruits Component](#).



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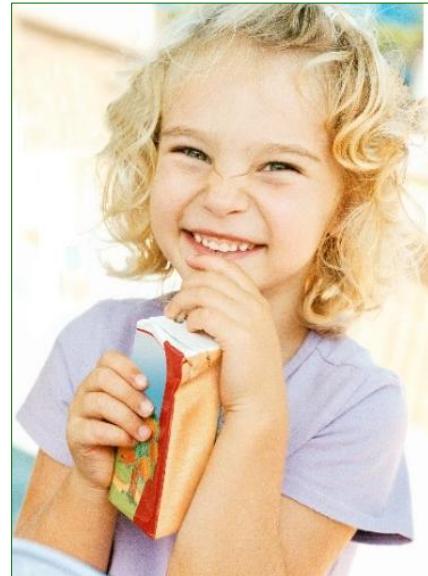
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Allowable Types of Juices

Juice served in SFSP meals and snacks must be pasteurized full-strength (100 percent) fruit juice, vegetable juice, or a combination of fruit and vegetable juices. Juices may be fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the terms below.

- Juice
- Full-strength juice
- 100 percent juice
- Reconstituted juice
- Juice from concentrate

Note: The statements “natural” and “organic” do not indicate that a juice is full strength.



Products that credit as 100 percent juice include:

- 100 percent juices including fresh, frozen, and made from concentrate (refer to “[Crediting Juice Concentrates](#)” in this document);
- frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice (refer to “[Crediting Frozen Juice Products](#)” in this document); and
- pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies (refer to “[Crediting Pureed Fruits and Vegetables in Smoothies](#)” in this document).

Juice products that are less than full strength, or that contain juice concentrates that are not fully reconstituted, do not credit in the school meal patterns. Except for juices in smoothies, juices cannot credit when used as an ingredient in another food or beverage (refer to “[Crediting Pureed Fruits and Vegetables in Smoothies](#)” in this document).

The USDA recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juices. Juices do not provide the same nutritional benefits as fruits and vegetables, which contain fiber, fewer calories, and more nutrients.

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Juice ingredients

The ingredients in juices can vary among manufacturers and products. The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) labeling regulations allow 100 percent juices to contain added ingredients and still be labeled "100% juice." Some 100 percent juices contain added ingredients such as artificial flavors, artificial colors (e.g., red 40, blue 1, yellow 5 and 6, and titanium dioxide), preservatives (e.g., sodium potassium sorbate), flavor enhancers (e.g., ethyl maltol), and emulsifiers or thickeners (e.g., glycerol esters of wood rosin and xanthan gum).

The CSDE encourages menu planners to read the product's ingredients statement and choose 100 percent juices without these added ingredients.

Crediting Juice Concentrates

Juice concentrates credit only when reconstituted with water to 100 percent full-strength juice and served in the form of juice. Juice concentrates do not credit when used as an ingredient in another food or beverage product, such as gelatin or sherbet made with juice concentrates.

Juice made from concentrate is reconstituted with a volume of water that is several times the amount of juice concentrate. A typical reconstitution ratio might be three parts water to one part concentrate, but this ratio may vary for different juice products.

Commercial juice products made from concentrate will list "water" as the first ingredient followed by the type of juice concentrate, for example, "water, orange juice concentrate" and "filtered water, grape juice concentrate." Juice made from concentrate that is labeled "100 percent juice" credits when SFSP sponsors follow the manufacturer's specific instructions for reconstituting.

Crediting Juice Blends at Lunch and Breakfast

Juice blends made from 100 percent full-strength juices credit in the SFSP meal patterns. They may be a combination of full-strength fruit juices, vegetable juices, or fruit and vegetable juices.

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Crediting Frozen 100 Percent Juice Products

Frozen 100 percent fruit juice products (such as frozen juice pops) credit toward the vegetables/fruits component based on the fluid volume prior to freezing. SFSP sponsors must request a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer to document this information. Frozen fruit juices count toward the juice limit at lunch and supper (refer to “[Juice Limit at Lunch and Supper](#)” in this document).

Guidance for crediting documentation

For information on PFS forms, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the Summer Food Service Program](#). For guidance on how to review a PFS, visit the USDA’s [Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement](#) webpage.

For guidance on the requirements for crediting documentation, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Summer Food Service Program](#), and [USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, SFSP 02-2025: Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements](#). Additional guidance is available on the CSDE’s [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Training on the documentation requirements is available in the CSDE’s Summer Meals annual training module, [Crediting Documentation for Summer Meals](#). Training on the requirements for PFS forms is available in [Module 8: Meal Pattern Documentation for Crediting Commercial Processed Products](#) of the CSDE’s training program, [What’s in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Crediting Apple Cider

Apple cider must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice. Pasteurized juices have been heat-treated to kill harmful bacteria. Menu planners must check labels, as some brands of apple cider are not pasteurized. SFSP sponsors cannot serve unpasteurized apple cider or any other type of unpasteurized juices. Apple cider counts toward the juice limit at lunch and supper (refer to “[Juice Limit at Lunch and Supper](#)” in this document).

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Crediting Coconut Water

Coconut water labeled as 100 percent juice credits toward the vegetables/fruits component based on the volume served. Coconut water counts toward the juice limit at lunch and supper (refer to “[Juice Limit at Lunch and Supper](#)” in this document).

Crediting Juice in Canned Fruits

A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed. For example, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of canned peaches in juice credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component. The juice in canned fruit does not count toward the juice limit at lunch and supper.

Water and syrup in canned fruit do not credit. For example, to credit canned peaches in water as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component, the serving must contain $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of peaches, not including the water.

Crediting Pureed Fruits and Vegetables in Smoothies

Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice. Crediting is based on the volume (cups) of pureed fruits and vegetables per serving. For example, a smoothie that contains $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pureed strawberries credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit juice. Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies count toward the juice limit at lunch and supper (refer to “[Juice Limit at Lunch and Supper](#)” in this document).

Concentrated fruit purees and concentrated juices are added sugars. They do not credit as juice unless they are reconstituted to full-strength fruit puree or full-strength juice.

SFSP sponsors must document the cups of pureed fruits and vegetables in the smoothie serving. Commercial products require a CN label or PFS. Smoothies made from scratch require a recipe. The USDA recommends using standardized recipes because they ensure accurate meal component contributions and document that menus meet the meal pattern requirements. For more information on CN labels, PFS forms, and standardized recipes, visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

The CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Smoothies in the Summer Food Service Program](#), summarizes the requirements for crediting smoothies in reimbursable meals and snacks.

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Juice Limits for Lunch and Supper

Juice served at lunch and supper must meet two requirements.

1. Juice cannot count for more than half of the vegetables/vegetables/fruits component at lunch and supper.
2. Juice must be a different kind from the other offered vegetable or fruit. For example, a lunch menu that contains $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of apple juice must also contain at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables or a different type of fruit (i.e., not apples). The juice limit applies to all sources of 100 percent juice (refer to "[Allowable Types of Juice](#)" in this document).

At least one of the two required servings of the vegetables/fruits component at lunch and supper must always be a whole fruit or vegetable (fresh, frozen, canned, or dried). The two servings cannot consist only of juice.

- **Example:** Juice and a strawberry smoothie cannot be the only two servings of the vegetables/fruits component (even if one is made from vegetables and the other is made from fruits) because both credit as juice. This would exceed the lunch and supper juice limit of no more than half of the vegetables/fruits component.

Juice limits for snack

The SFSP snack meal pattern requires any two of the four meal components (milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables/fruits, and grains/breads). A reimbursable snack cannot include a serving of juice (including frozen 100 percent juice pops and pureed fruits/vegetables in smoothies) and a serving of fruit or vegetables as the only two snack components. For example, a snack that contains fruit juice and carrot sticks is not reimbursable because both food items are from the same component (vegetables/fruits).

In addition, juice cannot be served at snack when milk is the only other meal component. For example, a snack that contains milk and a mango-peach smoothie is not reimbursable.

Crediting Juices in the Summer Food Service Program

Resources

[Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Summer Food Service Program](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingsfspaccepting_processed_product_documentation_sfsp.pdf

[Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#)

(USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling/tips-evaluating-pfs>

[Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs>

[Crediting Smoothies in the Summer Food Service Program](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingsfsp/credit_smoothies_sfsp.pdf

[Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

[Product Formulation Statements](#) (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition

Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/product-formulation-statements>

[Requirements for the Vegetables/Fruits Component of the Summer Food Service Program Meal](#)

[Patterns](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingsfsp/component_vegetables_fruits_sfsp.pdf

[Summer Meals Annual Training Module: Crediting Foods in the SFSP Meal Patterns Part 5:](#)

[Vegetables/Fruits Component](#) ("Annual Training" section of CSDE's SFSP webpage)

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/summer-food-service-program/annual-training#CreditingFoods>

[USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, and SFSP 02-2025: Guidance for Accepting](#)

[Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements](#):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling/guidance-accepting-processed-product-documentation>

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[USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs:](#)

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs>

[Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the Summer Food Service Program \(CDSE\):](#)

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingsfsp/cn_labels_sfsp.pdf

[Using Product Formulation Statements in the Summer Food Service Program \(CSDE\):](#)

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingsfsp/product_formulation_statements_sfsp.pdf

[Vegetables/Fruits Component](#) (CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-the-summer-food-service-program/vegetables-and-fruits>

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For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in the Summer Food Service Program](#) webpage or contact the [Summer Meals staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/sfsp/creditingsfsp/credit_juices_sfsp.pdf.



Crediting Juices in the Summer Food Service Program

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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